

✦ CHAPTER 1: The Acts of the Apostles

The Kingdom They Were Waiting For

(Acts 1:1–11)

INTRODUCTION

The Gospels introduced a King. Acts begins with a Kingdom.

The book of Acts opens with the continuation of an ancient promise. Jesus has risen from the dead. He appears to His disciples for forty days — confirming everything the prophets had foretold: **the restoration of the Kingdom of God.**

That phrase — “*the Kingdom of God*” — is widely misunderstood today. But to the disciples, it meant something very specific. They knew what it was. They had been raised in it. And when Jesus spoke of it, they understood exactly what He meant.

Throughout His ministry, He had never wavered:

- **His Message:** “*Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.*”
- **His Prayer:** “*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.*”
- **His Command:** “*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.*”

Because this wasn’t a new idea. He defined many things for His disciples, but not the Kingdom of God. He didn’t have to.

This was the same Kingdom that God had once reigned over and rejoiced in. A Kingdom broken by disobedience, sin, and idolatry — divided by divorce and dispersion — and now being regathered and restored.

As it is written.

ACTS 1:3

“To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the **kingdom of God.**”

What Was the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God had already existed once — **on earth.** It had a **King**, a **people**, a **land**, and **laws.**

That King was **God.** That people was **Israel.** Those laws were the **Mosaic Covenant.**

- *“Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”*
— **Exodus 19:6**

This wasn't figurative. The LORD reigned as Israel's **actual King**:

- *“And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.”*
— **Deuteronomy 33:5**
- *“The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.”*
— **Exodus 15:18**
- *“The LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.”*
— **Isaiah 33:22**

When God delivered Israel from Egypt, He didn't just rescue them — He **established them as His Kingdom**.

And like any true kingdom, it came with laws — not manmade, but divine. This was the **Mosaic Covenant**.

- *“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people... and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”*
— **Exodus 19:5–6**

God was not a symbolic King. He ruled His people directly — by covenant, by command, and through His prophets.

The Mosaic Covenant Was the Law of the Kingdom

It wasn't merely a religious tradition. It was the **constitutional law** of the Kingdom of God — given by the King to govern His subjects.

A Kingdom must have laws. A People must be ruled. A Covenant must be kept.

The Mosaic Covenant defined righteousness, justice, worship, inheritance, and blessing — not for “the world,” but for **Israel**, whom God had chosen to be His own.

And they accepted it:

- *“All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.”*
— **Exodus 19:8**

This was the Kingdom of God — **real, ordered, holy**.

Israel alone could say what no other nation could: *“The LORD is our King.”*

But They Rejected the King

Eventually, Israel wanted to be like the other nations.

- *“Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.”*
— **1 Samuel 8:5**

Though the LORD warned them, He gave them a man for an earthly king — first Saul, then David, then Solomon. After Solomon, the Kingdom on earth split in two:

- **The House of Israel** (10 tribes in the north)
- **The House of Judah** (2 tribes in the south)

The **House of Israel**, didn't merely drift. They **ran** from the covenant — golden calves in Bethel and Dan, counterfeit altars, rejected priesthood, pagan worship of Baal and Asherah, and child sacrifice to Molech.

- *"They caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD..."*
— **2 Kings 17:17**

After generations of warning, God sent them away.

- *"I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce..."*
— **Jeremiah 3:8**

The **House of Judah** lasted longer. But they too turned to idols and were eventually exiled to Babylon for seventy years.

After their return, they rebuilt the temple and resumed their festivals — but added layer upon layer of man-made tradition to the law God had given. What began in Babylon hardened into a new religious system — the *Jewish* religion — burying the covenant beneath human authority.

- *"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."*
— **Matthew 15:6**

They returned to the land — but not fully to the Lord. The Kingdom of God once visible on earth was broken. God's throne among men stood vacant — His people scattered. His covenant violated.

But it would not stay that way.

ACTS 1:6

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

This Was the Right Question

The disciples weren't confused. They had just spent forty days with the risen Christ, learning about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). They knew why He had died:

- To bear the sins of His people.
- To establish a New Covenant.
- To restore what had been broken.

They weren't asking *if* the Kingdom would return. They were asking *when*.

The prophets had promised it: God would not forget His people. He would regather the tribes, renew the covenant, and place a Son of David on the throne — forever.

As It Is Written...

Jeremiah 31:31–33

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah... I will put my law in their inward parts... and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Ezekiel 37:15–28

“Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph (House of Israel)... and the stick of Judah (House of Judah) ... and they shall become one in mine hand... And David my servant shall be king over them... and I will make an everlasting covenant with them...”

Jeremiah 33:14–17

“Behold, the days come... that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah... David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.”

This was not a new plan. It was the **same Kingdom — now being restored**: same people, same land, same throne. And now — a risen King, from the line of David.

And Jesus Answered...

- *“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”*
— Acts 1:7

He doesn't rebuke them. He confirms the expectation — but withholds the timeline. Then He gives them their mission.

ACTS 1:8

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

They were to **wait** for “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4)—the Holy Ghost—“not many days hence” (Acts 1:5). Then, **endued with power from on high**, they would go to:

- **Jerusalem** — the capital of Judah
- **Judaea and Samaria** — the historic lands of both houses
- **The uttermost part of the earth** — the nations where Israel had been scattered

In the first century Roman world, the uttermost parts had become home to the dispersed tribes. Now the Spirit would send witnesses to find them — and bring them home.

As It Is Written...

- **Deuteronomy 28:64** — “And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other”
 - **Deuteronomy 30:4** — “If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee...”
 - **Amos 9:9** — “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”
 - **Isaiah 11:12** — “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”
 - **Isaiah 43:5-6** — “I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west...”
 - **Hosea 1:10** — “It shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”
 - **Zechariah 10:9-10** — “I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries... and I will bring them again...”
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ACTS 1:9-11

“And when he had spoken these things... he was taken up... And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven... two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*”

The King Has Taken His Throne

Jesus didn't ascend to wait. He ascended to **reign**.

The restoration of the Kingdom had begun — not figuratively or philosophically, but covenantally and literally, as prophesied. “It has been given.”

- *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”*
— **Luke 12:32**

He was taken up; **“a cloud received him out of their sight.”** They stood in awe. Then two men in white steadied their hearts and pointed them forward: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **This same Jesus... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**” — Acts 1:11

- *“Whom heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things.”*
— **Acts 3:21**

Not to **start** the Kingdom, but to **complete** its restoration — to gather the scattered, judge the wicked tenants, and reign forever as King over His united, purified people and Kingdom.

FINAL SUMMARY

- The Kingdom of God once existed on earth — ruled directly by God.
- The Mosaic Covenant was its law.
- Israel rejected the King and broke the covenant.
- God **divorced** the North (House of Israel) and disciplined the South (House of Judah).
- He promised to restore it by regathering the twelve tribes and raising up a Son of David

And now, in Acts 1:

- Jesus **confirms** the Kingdom (v. 3)
- The disciples ask **when** it will be restored (v. 6)
- Jesus withholds the timeline but **confirms the mission** — to gather the scattered (v. 8)
- The angels promise He shall so come in like manner (v. 11), while heaven receives Him until the times of restitution (Acts 3:21).

The Kingdom of God is not “heaven.” It is the fulfillment of God's covenants with Israel: the regathering of His people, the renewing of His law, and the reign of Jesus, His King.

As it is written.

